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ABSTRACT

Identification of the causes of job stress for public school superintendents, with a focus on personal-experiential and task variables, is the purpose of this study. Methodology involved a mail survey of 1,531 randomly selected superintendents. Canonical correlation analysis (CCA) and multiple regression correlation (MCR) analysis were used to determine the relationships among perceptions of job safety, personal variables, and task variables. Findings indicate that a majority of superintendents have positive feelings about their safety on the job. A positive relationship exists between job safety and 22 of the task variables, and no relationship exists between the personal-experiential variables and job safety. A total of 106 recommendations are offered for reducing job stress and improving job safety, with emphases on personal growth, administrative cooperation, and contract negotiation. Tables present statistical findings of the survey. An extensive bibliography is included. (LMI)

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PRESSURES, STRESSES, ANXIETIES, AND ON-JOB SAFETY OF THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

School superintendents play a vital role in the education of the young people in this nation. Professional pressures, stresses, anxieties, and their on-job safety has a bearing on the overall success of the educational programs under their supervision. Experience as well as research tends to indicate that where people have more professional pressures, stresses, anxieties, safety-risk on job, there is low levels of productivity and organizational success. In addition, these factors affects a person's motivation, mental health, approach to life adjustment and self actualization.[1] Lower the levels of professional pressures, stresses, anxieties, safety-risk on job, more the productivity and organizational success.

Superintendency is a demanding and important position in education. Superintendents perform a wide variety of tasks. They deal with policy implementation, curriculum, finance, personnel, collective negotiation, planning and goal setting, evaluation, accountability, special education, state and federal regulations, facilities management; relationship with board-members, assistants, principals, teachers,

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[1]Krishan Chand "Job Satisfaction of Superintendents in the U.S." (Ed.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1982), pp. 1-2.

community, non-certified staff, parents of the students, state department of education, business people, and a number of other tasks as needed.[1]

They have pressures from individuals and groups e.g. from local politicians, church or religious groups, business or commercial organizations, labor unions, parents of children or local PTA's, teaching staff or teacher organizations, tax payers associations, local news media, fraternal organizations, school board members, town finance committee or city council, local service clubs, personal friends, and local chamber of commerce.[2]

Some degree of tension or stress is necessary to maintain the high level of motivation and attention required for any complex task. Actors delivering their lines, athletes competing on the field, and executives juggling high-risk options all thrive on an appropriate level of tension.

But in today's society, tension can easily get out of hand. And at that point, stress is no longer constructive: instead of giving you an adrenaline high and pushing you to do your best, too much stress prevents you from thinking clearly or acting effectively.[3]

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[1]Krishan Chand The Current Trend in the Job Description of School Superintendents in the U.S. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, U.S. Department of Education, ED 239 364, 1983.

[2]Dr. Neal Gross The Pressures on and the Dilemmas of the School Superintendents, NESDEC, 1954, pp. 13-14.

[3]William R. Papallo, "Launching a Superintendency", Executive Educator National School Boards Association (Alexandria, VA), May 1990, p. 17.

Superintendent of Schools, Marcus Foster in California was murdered. He was shot as he left the school district office.[1]

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Frederick D. Holiday of Clevland committed suicide after writing a note that complained about the school board's "petty politics".[2]

Superintendent of Schools of the Vader, Washington School District, Robert Fluetsh said he "just ran away" from pressure.[3]

Superintendent Genn of School District 27 in New York City reported that his livelihood as a superintendent was threatened by some school board members unless he was "a good boy and allow them to take charge of hiring and personnel and not get too involved in the budget.[4]

Superintendent of Schools of Newark, N.J. was awarded a settlement of $ 660,000 by its board of education to render his resignation.[5]

Superintendent of Schools Gordon Tope of Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, Alaska was given a settlement of $185,000 by its board of education to sell his contract.[6]

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[1]Richard F. Arthur The School Administrator American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, VA June 1989, p. 18.

[2]Superintendent's Suicide ... The New York Times Frebruary 3, 1985.

[3]Anchorage Times, January 20, 1980, p. B3.

[4]News Day, N.Y., October 25, 1989, p. 8.

[5]New York Times, November 3, 1985, p. 47.

[6]"Board Votes to Buy Tope Contract", Anchorage Daily News, September 19, 1984.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Norward Roussell of Selma, Alabama sued the school board seeking $10 million dollars in damages.[1]

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laval S. Wilson of Boston had conflict with the members of school committee, parents, teachers, politicians, and business leaders.[2] He was given a settlement of $260,000 by his board to sell his contract.[3]

Superintendent John Murphy of Prince George's County Board of Education cancelled his contract extension, citing "racial politics and political gamesmanship".[4]

Superintendent of Schools Ronald E. Etheridge of Columbus, Ohio was facing ouster by black community groups. ... he narrowly avoided being removed from office when four board members nearly forced a vote on buying out the remaining 16 months of his three-year contract.[5]

Spalding stated that: "Superintendents have more anxiety than any other people who I have tested outside of mental institution."[6]

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[1]"Selma's Schools Superintendent Sues Board", New York Times, February 18, 1990, p. L31.

[2]"Racial Dispute Erupts in Boston Over Dismissal of Schools' Chief", New York Times, February 21, 1990, p. A16.

[3]Executive Educator July 1990, p. 3.

[4]The Washington Times, March 27, 1990, p. B3.

[5]Education Week, Washington D.C., April 11, 1990, p. 5.

[6]William B. Spalding, The Superintendency of Public Schools - An Anxious Profession (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p.1.

In a survey, sixty eight percent (68%) of the superintendents reported an unusually high level of stress associated with the superintendent's post.[1]

Significance and Need for the Study

This study has significance in several ways. For a long time, job safety and stress has been considered to be effecting the productivity and organizational success. Hence, a study of this kind may provide clues or insights to those factors that lead to increased productivity and maintenance of a dynamic organization.

Understanding the sources of pressures, stresses, anxieties, and on-job safety of the school superintendents is important in itself. It has direct implications for personal performance, effective organizational behavior, and mental health.

Local school boards and state boards of education may use the findings of this study to compare the attitudes of superintendents and to assemble data that can secure a comfortable and effective appointment for them. It could be useful for planning services to meet the needs of the chief school administrators under a variety of distinct conditions and constraints. The findings may also help the prospective and incumbent superintendents as it will portray for them some of the realities of the job.

Conditions that can adversely influence school effectiveness and human fulfillment should be investigated

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[1]Marilee C. Rist "Superintendents: Here's how you work, live, play, and think" The Executive Educator September 1984, p. 27.

and recommendations be made for their improvement. It may help reduce turnover, stress, pressure, anxiety, and may help to increase their motivation and self-fulfillment. The study would be of interest, use, and importance to educators, trustees, school boards and others who are concerned with the work of superintendents.

In summary, this study can have significance for its possible practical implications as well as for its limited part in the extension of our knowledge about the working lives of chief school administrators.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study used a standard survey methodology which is an effective means for gathering data to determine the status of a particular topic.[1] In conducting this study a series of steps were taken as described in the sections that follow in the sequence they occured.[2]

Procedural Problem:

Population and Sample Selection

The study population consisted of all the superintendents of the public schools in the United States of which there are 15,236.[3] They constituted the unit of analysis. Champion says:[4]

> For the statistical inference, a frequently recommended sampling fraction is 1/10th of the population. Although 1/10 is the recommended sample/population ratio, for extremely large populations such as the population of the U.S., a considerably smaller sampling fraction may be quite appropriate.

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[1]Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964) p.392.

[2]For details see, Krishan Chand, "Job Satisfaction of Superintendents in the U.S." (Ed.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1982).

[3]Jeffrey W. Willies, Educational Directory (Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, 1980),pp.1-175).

[4]Dean J.Champion, Basic Statistics for Social Research (PA: Chandler Publishing Co, 1970) p. 15.

Accordingly, 10% of the total population of superintendents, i.e. 1,531 was selected, using a table of random numbers, from the directories of names of superintendents from each of the 50 states and teritories. This sample selection decision was made because it would most likely provide data from small, medium, and large size districts; urban, suburban, rural and school districts from every region of the nation. In addition, random sampling by the state represented the population better,[1] and was more effecient than simple random sampling of the total population, per se.[2]

Instrument Development

Design and Testing of Task Variables Instrument

Related task variables were obtained from previous research studies and the professional literature, such as: Cambell,[3] Morphet,[4] Miller,[5] Mort,[6] Cambell and Gregg,[7] and Moehlman.[8]

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[1] W. James Popham Educational Statistics (N.Y.: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 47.

[2] William J. Goode, A basic Course in Sociiological Statistics (N.Y.: Henry Holt & Co., 1959), p. 231.

[3] Ronald D. Campbell, Edwin M. Bridges and R. Nystrand Introduction to Educational Administration (Boston: A & B, Inc, 1977).

[4] Edgar L. Morphet, Roe L. Johns, and Theodore L. Reller Educational Organization & Administration (NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

[5] Van Miller, George R. Madden and James B. Kincheloe The Public Administration of American School Systems (N.Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1972).

[6] Paul R. Mort Principles of School Administration (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946).

[7] Ronald F. Campbell and Russell T. Gregg Administrative Behavior in Education (N.Y.: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957).

[8] Arthur B. Moellman School Administration (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951).

The variables thus obtained were then arranged in task or functional categories and shown to three professors in educational administration. They were requested to rate a statement, (1) clear/not clear, (2) relevant/not relevant, and (3) current/not current in today's school administration. All the professors rated all the items clear, relevant and current. Without rejecting any of the items, the professors some suggestions that improved the syntax and the style of writing. The instrument was pilot tested to confirm the relevance and applicability to the proposed study. It was administered to five superintendents.

None of the superintendents rated any item "not related"; Hence none of the items was eliminated. The selected pilot group of superintendents was representative of the total population as it reflected the following conditions:

(1) urban school district, (2) suburban school district, (3) small school district, (4) rural school district, (5) persons with many years of experience and (6) persons with few years of experience.

Tho ensure that the participants in the pilot study would not become a part of the study sample, their names were removed from the state directories of school superintendents.

Design and Testing of personal-experiential Variables instrument

Related personal-experiential variables were obtained from previous research studies. The variables selected are:

grade span, enrollment, type of school district, size of staff, education, certification, experience, age, race, marital status, sex, spouse-employment, and extra curricular activities involving working with youth. These variables were selected as they are common, in fact almost standard in the terminology of survey research in educational administration. By continuing to use these variables it is possible to conduct comparisons among research studies. Procedure to pilot test the instrument was the same as that of task variables instrument given earlier on page 8.

General Procedure

A letter of introduction and a copy of the questionnaire (personal-experiential and task variables) were mailed to each selected superintendent. The letter provided information about the study and invited each respondent to participate. Responses to the questionnaire were accepted through the end of the third week of the mailing date. No follow-up was needed as the number of responses received was sufficient for statistical analysis. Using the formula provided by Cohen and Cohen it is determined that an n of 186 was sufficient for statistical analysis.[1] Recent experience with data collection about the superintendents showed a rate of return of usable questionnaires of 32% without follow-up procedures (American Association of School Administrators).[2] Consequently, it was expected that about 490 responses would be received.

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[1]J. Cohen and P. Cohen Applied Multiple Regression Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1975).

[2]1980-81 AASA Status and Opinion Survey, The School Administrator (Arlington, VA: AASA, September 1981), p.26.

Treatment of Data

The data collected were processed for computer analysis at the New York University Academic Computer Center. Canonical correlation analysis (CCA) and multiple regression/correlation (MRC) analysis were used to determine the relationships.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Data-analysis of the national study reveals that nationwide about two percent (1.8%) of the superintendents have negative feelings about their safety on job, 13% of the superintendents have negative to medium feelings about their safety on job, and 87% of the school superintendents have positive feelings about their safety on job.[1] See Table 1.

TABLE 1

SAFETY ON JOB
(nationwide)

Feelings	Frequency	Percent
Negative 1	5	1.0
2	4	0.8
3	58	11.2
4	189	36.2
Positive 5	264	50.8
Total	520	100.0

[1]Krishan Chand, "Job Satisfaction of Superintendents in the United States" (Ed.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1982).

These data are derived from the data collected for the said dissertation. This reference also applies to table 2.

EFFECT OF TASK VARIABLES
(nationwide)

Two statistical techniques, cannonical correlations and multiple/correlation analysis revealed that, nationwide there is a positive relationship between the safety on job of the superintendents and 22 task variables: (1) renewal of employment contract, (2) status in the community as superintendent, (3) opportunity for personal growth, (4) overall satisfaction as superintendent, (5) sense of achievement in their profession, (6) recognition of their work by others, (7) attitude of community towards education, (8) numbers of hours put in at work per week, (9) attitude of parents towards education, (10) importance they give to their relationship with the board of education, (11) importance they give to their relationship with teachers, (12) importance given to employ staff, (13) evaluation of superintendents, (14) importance they give to their relationship with community, (15) importance they give to school finance, (16) importance they give to their relationship with non-certified staff, (17) time they spent on relationship with teachers, (18) importance they give to their relationship with assistants, (19) importance they give to dismiss staff, (20) time they spent on their relationship with community, (21) time they spent on their relationship with assistants, and (22) time they spent on their relationship with principals. Coefficient of correlations between the safety on job of the school superintendents and task variables are given in table 2.

TABLE 2

COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SAFETY ON JOB OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND TASK VARIABLES (nationwide)

Dependent variable= Safety on job Task Variables	r
Renewal of their employment	.5
Status in the community	.4
Opportunity for personal growth	.4
Overall satisfaction as superintendent	.4
Sense of achievement in their profession	.3
Recognition of their work by others	.3
Attitude of community towards education	.3
Number of hours put in at work per week	.3
Attitude of parents towards education	.3
Importance they give to their relationship with the board	.3
Importance they give to their relationship with teachers	.3
Importance given to employ staff	.3
Evaluation of superintendents	.3
Importance they give to their relationship with community	.3
Imporatance they give to school finance	.2
Importance they give to their relationship with non-certified staff	.2
Time they spent on relationship with teachers	.2
Importance they give to their relationship with assistants	.2
Importance they give to dismiss staff	.2
Time they spent on their relationship with community	.2
Time they spent on their relationship with assistants	.2
Time they spent on their relationship with principals	.2

n = 520

The other task variables do no seems to have any effect on their safety on job. It does not matter how much importance they places on or how much time they spends on (1) state regulations, (2) collective bargaining, (3) federal regulations, (4) relationship with department of education, and (5) curriculum, nor does it matter that how much time they spend with non-certified staff, dismissal of staff, employing the staff, school finance, and paper work.

EFFECT OF PERSONAL-EXPERIENTIAL VARIABLES

None of the personal-experiential variables appear to have any effect on the safety of the superintendents on their job. It does not matter whether he (she) is employed by an elementary, junior high, senior high or a K-12 school district; it does not matter if he (she) is working for a small, medium or large school district; it does not matter if he (she) is working for an urban, suburban, or rural school district; it does not matter if he (she) is working for a fiscally dependent or independent district; it does not matter how many people are employed in the district. Nor does it matter if a superintendent has a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or a higher degree. It does not matter what is his (her) major field of study. It does not matter what is his (her) area of certification nor does it matter what has been his (her) experience as an educator/ non educator.

The superintendent's age, race, marital status, sex, whether or not his (her) spouse works, or if he (she) takes an active part in extra curricular activities involving youth do not have any noticiable influence on their safety on job.

CHAPTER IV

106 recommendations to deal effectively with unnecessary pressures, stresses, anxieties, and on-job safety

YOU HAVE LESSER PRESSURES, STRESSES, ANXIETIES, AND MORE ON-JOB SAFETY WHEN YOU:

GENERAL

1. Clearly define and understand the role of the board of education, superintendent, and other administrators and staff, certified and non-certified
2. Assume all of those responsibilities and authorities assigned to you within the framework of the defined role
3. Keep abreast with the philosophy and objectives of the school district
4. Make decisions when sufficient facts are available
5. Share your problems and concerns with others whom you can trust
6. Understand the goals and objectives of the school district
7. Support the decisions of the board even when it is contrary to your own recommendations
8. Visit the schools to understand problems the schools are facing
9. Maintain a good working relationship with your board of education. You should work with the board in a climate of mutual trust, respect, and open communication
10. Seek timely reports from other administrators in your school district concerning the status of the district

11. Do not hesitate to seek help from other superintendents. They are usually very willing to listen and help other superintendents in any way they can
12. Don't show any favoritism to your own friends or relatives
13. Don't use your position for any of your own advantage or for the advantage of your friends or relatives
14. Clearly understand the difference between administrative roles and policy making
15. Keep yourself informed about the changes in education and needs of society
16. Collect the necessary data/information from the most credible sources
17. Work cooperatively with others
18. Delegate authority and responsibility prudently
19. Maintain a good relationship with the staff, community, and other groups involved
20. Deal in terms of the board policies

PERSONAL

21. Are not afraid to admit a mistake
22. Are social conscience
23. Have organizational capability
24. Is the superintendency for you? Analyse it very carefully and thoroughly. If you think,it is not for you, don't become a superintendent or leave it as soon as you can
25. Are dedicated, committed and motivated to the maintenance and improvement of a local school system
26. Have no selfish interest in serving the school district
27. Have an open mind and considers differing views

28. Are willing to learn
29. Likes to serve the community
30. Do read educational material
31. Participate in educational conferences, seminars, and workshops
32. Are positive in approach
33. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know the answer to any particular question
34. Have leadership qualities
35. Have courage to take action in the interest of the schools inspite of outside pressures
36. Be honest. You will get in more trouble if you are not honest
37. Are a good listener
38. Are dedicated to serve the education of the students in the district
39. Respect the opinions of the others
40. Are courteous and respectful to other people

WORKING WITH THE BOARD

41. Enter into a contract which is agreeable to you as well as to the employing board
42. Provide the board with accurate, timely, and complete information concerning the needs and conditions of the school district
43. Strive to build a working relationship of mutual trust, respect and open communication with the board
44. Keep in mind that board has the prerogative to make the final decision on all matters

45. Are sensitive to the desires of the board
46. Support the decisions of the board even when it is contrary to your recommendations
47. Treat the board members equally well
48. Keeping the meetings short and to the point
49. Keep in mind the philosophy and objectives of the board
50. Are in agreement with the board on vital aspects of the management of the school district
51. Work more closely with the board president
52. Work more closely with all the chairpersons of the various commiittees of the board
53. Help the board in evaluating their expection of you
54. Assist the board in evaluation of your performance
55. Give credit to the school board members publicly on every opportunity for student achievement and progress of the educational program
56. Take enough authority from the board to carry out designated responsibilities
57. Inform the board of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy
58. Develop a plan for board-superintendent communication
59. Put in writing the roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent
60. Work as a team with the board

BOARD MEETINGS

61. Plan for the meetings as carefully and thoroughly as possible
62. Attend and participate in all the possible meetings that you can

63. Make sure that every appropriate item in need of the board action is on the agenda
64. Do your home work before going to a board meeting
65. Establish a suitable format for all the board meetings
66. Assist the board in conducting the meetings in a pleasant atmosphere
67. Assist the board in evaluating the board meetings
68. Assist the board in making decisions only after they have heared all the sides of the issues
69. Encourage your other administrators in their effective participation in the meetings
70. Welcome and encourage citizen participation in the meetings

RENEWAL OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

71. Provide an effective administrative leadership in accordance with board policies
72. Provide the best possible educational programs within the resources of the school district
73. Provide an adequate program of public relations
74. Keep the community informed about board policies, programs, and district procedures
75. Decide with the board on specific procedure that they should use to evaluate your performance
76. Your original employment contract should state in clear terms the procedure of renewal of your contract that should be mutually agreeable to you and the board
77. Identify and solve problems in time
78. Keep the board and public informed of your work

79. Don't forget that the school board hires and fires the superintendent
80. Find in advance at the time of periodic evaluations if the board intends to renew your contract. Analyse your own situation if you want to continue, otherwise inform the board in advance

STATUS IN THE COMMUNITY[1]

81. Assign an administrator to coordinate district-wide community relations activities
82. Form staff-community advisory committees for various subject areas, each building, and region
83. Support PTA's and other activities for citizen involvement
84. Publish periodicals, reports, and news letters on community activities of the district. Use all the available media to inform the citizens about the school programs
85. Involve volunteers in tutoring, counseling, speakers bureaus, and other programs
86. Strengthen relationship with board, assistants, principals, teachers, non-certified staff, parents, and students
87. Visit all the schools during the school year
88. Take an active part in the community activities
89. Strengthen cross-cultural education and minority programs
90. Keep good organizational climate in the district
91. Maintain quality educational programs and emphasize on student achievement

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[1]Krishan Chand Superintendent-Community Relationship in the U.S. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 249 616, 1984.

92. Encourage student activities in which students, teachers, and parents participate together
93. Make sure that people get warm reception when they visit schools, central office, and school staff
94. Use all other suitable formal and informal strategies consisting of academic and non-academic activities
95. Avoid strikes and other conflicts

OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

96. Prepare yourself thoroughly for superintendency
97. Join professional organizations
98. Read more professional literature regularly, School Administrator (Va), Executive Educator (Va), Education Week (Washington DC), ERIC (USDOE), suitable books, etc.
99. Attend various workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.
100. If you have not earned a doctor's degree in educational administration, try to earn the same
101. Analyse your strengths and weaknesses and try to improve in your weak areas
102. Take brief holidays from time to time

OVERALL SATISFACTION AS SUPERINTENDENT[1]

103. Attempt to renew your employment contract, as it is positively related to the overall satisfaction of superintendents
104 Attempt to achieve status in the community as it is positively related to overall satisfaction of superintendents

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[1]Krishan Chand "Job Satisfaction of Superintendents in the U.S." (Ed.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1982).

105. Develop a sense of achievement in your profession as it is positively related to overall satisfaction of superintendents

MISCELLANEOUS

106. Deal effectively with tasks listed on page 14 in table 2 that has a bearing on the on-job safety.

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